

Handbook for ESL Parents

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by
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Abstract

The role of parents in the educational process of their children is fundamental, and if we think about the immigrant families that arrive and who are currently in the country, it is even more so. Students must not only learn and get to know a new country, but also a new language. That is why the support of the county, the ESL department and the educational community is fundamental to achieve a successful adaptation as well as the acquisition of the language that will allow them to develop in the academic and social environment.

That is why I have created Handbook for ESL Parents, which aims to help parents with techniques and resources on how to help and support their child in the process of learning English. At the same time, the handbook has relevant information about the English as a Second Language (ESL) department and its role, the people who work there, and what services it provides to families. This handbook will also allow the educational community to know all the benefits that this department has for them, thus allowing both families and schools to support each other and achieve student success.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis first to my family: my mother, father, brother, sister, Olivia and Borja. Thank you for being with me and supporting me in all my dreams and adventures. Also, to my friends in Chile, here in the United States and around the world, without your support, strength and support I could not have achieved this. Finally, I would like to thank my husband Jason, thank you for holding me back, supporting me and advising me. Thank you all for your unconditional love.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The number of immigrants in the United States has grown significantly over the last few years. At the present time, at least 13% of the population are immigrants (Budiman, 2020). This growth has led, according to the Department of Education, to over 4.8 million students who are English language learners (ELLs), representing 10% of the total student population nationwide. According to the National Education Association (2020), "by 2025, 1 out of 4 children in classrooms across the nation will be an English language learner (ELL) student" (NEA website); this provides an opportunity to visualize why it is important to work with immigrant families and students in this new country both in society and in the educational system. These children are the ones who are currently in our classrooms; therefore, we should work and support them and their families.

I strongly believe that the education of students plays a fundamental role in the motivation and commitment of their parents. The Philadelphia Education Research Consortium (2016) stated that "When schools, families, and communities work together, student outcomes are better" (p. 1), which allows us to understand that it is of utmost importance that schools engage, educate, and provide information to parents on how to support their children, and also that they provide parents with relevant information about the school and the county. Providing tools and guidance to parents on how to become involved and active agents in the educational process of their children, is something that should be done in every county in this country. For this reason, the main objective of this research project is to create a handbook for parents on how they can

support their children in the learning process. Additionally, to provide these parents with practical information about the resources that the county has for them.

During the last three years, I have worked as a Spanish teacher in a school where nearly 49% of the students are Hispanic, so I have had to interpreter for my colleagues almost weekly and support other members of my educational community in communicating with the parents of their students during phone calls, meetings and other circumstances. At the same time, I have had to provide basic information to parents about the school and the county. All that I have experienced has allowed me to understand the importance of being able to provide information to these families in their native language. This allows families to feel welcomed and supported by the educational community. Being able to express their concerns and understand what is happening with their child is something that brings the school closer to the families. These experiences have also allowed me to realize that most of these families are not aware that the county has a phone line and a department that offers free translation services. In addition to translating and interpreting, it provides relevant information about the educational system, resources, and workshops. For this reason, I would like to provide families with more of this necessary information through this handbook.

My district has at least 3,000 ELLs, which represents a total of 7.5% of the students (UCPS Website). The majority of these students are of Hispanic origin (91%) (UPCS website). This county has an ESL department that provides academic assistance to students, but also has materials and resources for both regular teachers, academics, ESL teachers, and families. Unfortunately, many of these people, especially families, are not aware of this department and all the resources they have. That is why I believe the creation of a handbook can promote this information to parents, so that they can access all the information provided by the county.

Mitchell (2016), mentioned that "that children whose parents are involved in supporting their learning do better in school. For English-learners, parent involvement is especially important for supporting successful language development" (Education Week, Special Report). That is why through research I have compiled different strategies specifying how parents can support their students' learning. In the handbook, families will find information and concrete examples of different resources and activities that parents can access at home, such as websites. This will allow parents to become more involved in the learning process of their students.

Finally, the beneficiaries of this handbook are the parents and families, but also all members of the educational community. A handbook with practical information will allow schools to know how to support their families and what information schools can provide to build the relationship with students' families.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The United States is recognized for being a country of technological advances, diversity of cultures, and economic stability. In 1931, historian and writer James Truslow Adams created the phrase “American Dream”, which he defined as:

That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement... but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (p. 404)

“American Dream” has become synonymous around the world, identifying the United States as land full of opportunity. Families from around the world have decided to move to the United States to start a new life. Whether they seek a better opportunity and personal, professional or academic growth. They travel to the United States to pursue their own "American Dream."

According to the Migration Policy Institute website, an "immigrant is a person living in a country other than that of his or her birth." (p.1). At the present time, approximately 26% of the U.S. population are immigrants (Migration Policy Institute,

2019). This allows us to measure how many families and students there are and will be in the educational system.

Many of the students in schools are children of people who immigrated to this country in search of their American Dream. Ali Golchin (2015), wrote that the most common reason why people immigrate to United States is because they are “looking at better opportunities to find work, better living conditions, to be with their American families, to escape their troubled country, to get the best education” (p.1). This is where the school plays a fundamental role in making these families feel welcomed, supported, and listened to in this new life.

In this chapter, I begin by defining engagement. Then, I continue with the role that families play in the academic development of their students, as well as the importance of engagement in education. Next, I describe the role of the educational system, why it is important to engage the families of ELLs. Finally, I explain how schools can work with these families and their students.

Definition of Engagement

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary online, engagement means “involved with somebody/something in an active and interested way” (p.2). Now, talking about students, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, stated that student engagement is “multifaceted, characterized by behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Student engagement is a key element of a positive school climate” (p. 1). Also, as defined by The Glossary of Education Reform (2016), “student

engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education” (p.1).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on their website defines Family/Parent Engagement in Schools as "parents and school staff working together to support and enhance the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents" (p. 1). All of these definitions mention that engagement involves other people, and regard education as a fundamental element to improve learning and generate a positive environment in the school.

Family Engagement

In the educational system, principals and teachers constantly mention the importance of the role that families play in the academic process of the students. It is expected and desired that families feel motivated, and therefore, they must generate a relationship between all members of the educational community (educators, other families, administrative staff, etc.). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016) points out that “Family engagement refers to the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote children’s development, learning, and wellness, including in the planning, development, and evaluation of such activities, programs, and systems” (p.1). In turn, the academic performance of students also sees benefits from the correct parent involvement. The authors Thigpen and Freedberg (2014) indicate that “Engaging parents is particularly important for English learners and students from low-

income families. In fact, greater parent involvement is correlated with higher student test scores and better grades for the school as a whole” (p.7).

Unfortunately, educators observe the lack of engagement of families for a myriad of reasons. Parsons and Shim (2019) stated that one of the reasons why these families are not as engaged is due to "cultural and/or linguistic" barriers (p. 38). That is the reason why the education system has to take a leadership role to meet and engage these families in their children's education. As mentioned by Breiseth et al. (2015), it is of utmost importance to get to know ELL families in order to build a relationship that will help student success.

When families are involved in the educational system, it not only brings academic benefits to the students, but also to the community. Parson and Shim (2019) mentioned the great value that these families bring. One of the values that schools should work on is respect for diversity. ELL families bring different backgrounds and cultures to the table. This allows students to learn that although we may have different cultures and beliefs, we are the same. Involving families and their cultures will engage and give them a sense of belonging to the school and their children's education.

Additionally, families are often unable to support their children in the learning process because they do not know the language. This leads to a loss of motivation and engagement. Zarate (2007) mentioned that "For many parents, language was an insurmountable barrier to participation in their children's academic tasks, especially as their children progressed through school and the material became increasingly difficult" (p. 9). The aforementioned provides an idea of the importance of knowing how to

support, not only the students, but also their families. Since families play a fundamental role in the success of their children in all aspects of their lives.

The engagement of families and the community will bring many benefits to students in a variety of ways. Hughes et al. (2016) highlighted that knowing the needs, culture, and beliefs of students will allow instruction to be focused on what they need. In turn, this will let them know what specific support they will need. At the same time, Hughes et al. (2016) mentioned that "strategic partnerships between school, family and community are associated with higher levels of academic achievement, better school attendance, higher graduation rates, higher enrollment in postsecondary education and a more positive attitude toward school" (p. 2). Hence, families can know how to support their students at home in their native language, reinforcing what they have learned in the classroom.

As a final point, there are different ways to engage families and motivate them to participate in their children's educational activities. The National Education Association, publishes in 2015 a guide called "How Educators Can Advocate for English Language Learners", in which it mentions "Identify ways the school can support families in participating in school activities and events and provide what is needed (e.g., childcare, transportation to and from events, interpreters, dinner, flexible meeting times, and dual language resources)" (p. 23). Providing them with something as simple as an interpreter service will allow these families to feel more engaged with their child's school.

The Role of School Systems

The school systems (teachers, principals, administrators) are responsible for involving students and their families in the educational process. Onchwari and Keengwe (2020) believed that "family-school conversation begins with school administrators and teachers compassionately listening to parents' beliefs, hopes, dreams and concerns" (p. 3). If the school system focuses on why there is low family engagement, they will know that many families are not engaged because they are unclear about their role or responsibilities due to cultural differences (Yaafouri 2019). Yaafouri (2019) suggested that teachers should give them the tools by communicating responsibilities, such as "helping your child learn how to organize their study time" (p. 3). Along with it, Yaafouri (2019) also indicated that parents should use technological resources such as translation applications to facilitate support.

Now to discuss teachers. Many educators feel that they are not prepared to work with this type of student (Chen et al., 2008). Chen et al. (2008), described how teachers do not receive the adequate support and professional development needed to work with their students. Chen et al. (2008) also mentioned that teachers need to be trained and learn how to work with ELLs and their families. As well as learn about their demographics, language, and ideologies for these communities. All of these factors will contribute to the success and the relationship between families, students, and the school.

Hughes et al (2016) mentioned that the role of the teacher and the educational system is to provide families with skills, support, and information on how they can help the learning process. For example, inviting them to the classroom or allowing them to work on reading skills in their native language. Also mentioned by Hughes et al (2016)

was the importance of communicating to families the different programs the school offers to support them. In addition, parents can get involved in the school through volunteering. It is of utmost importance that "parents have a better understanding of the language development process, as well as the education system in general" (p. 3). Simple acts such as those just mentioned, will allow families to feel more involved.

The school should know their students and families in order to provide them with the best education possible. Steaher (2013) stated that "Advocacy for ELS also means knowing about each of my EL students and families backgrounds to be able to know which appropriate action I need to take on each person's behalf" (p.8). Understanding each background and necessity leads to providing a better support in different aspects, not only academic or linguistic, but also cultural and social.

Why Families Must Support Their ELL Students

Many parents want to be able to help their children. However, not knowing the language or what strategies to use often limits them. Abrego et al (2021) mentioned that "students whose families are engaged also show more resilience and ability to persevere even in the face of obstacles" (p. 4). That is why it is important for parents to know how to support their children in the process of learning the language as well as in adapting to a new country.

Meanwhile, the University of Cambridge, on its website, indicated that "Parents play a vital role by giving children the courage and confidence to do their work, providing encouragement and helping them develop study skills" (p. 8). When we

support our children, we provide them the tools required for a better future. Since by knowing two languages, their social and work possibilities are broadened. Zelasko and Antunez (2000) asserts that "The child who knows more than one language has personal, social, cognitive, and economic advantages which will continue throughout his/her life" (p. 9). For this reason, it is important for families to, not only encourage and support their children in the process of learning a second language, but also to make them feel proud of their origins and culture.

How to Support Families and Students

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Education published a book for newcomer families in the United States, as well as for all members of the education system, providing relevant information and resources. The book "Newcomer Toolkit", noted that:

To achieve integration into American culture and society-and American schools in particular-newcomer students and their families need multiple forms of support from multiple sources. Newcomers and their families have four basic needs: 1. A welcoming environment. 2. High-quality academic programs designed to meet the academic and language development needs of newcomer students. 3. Social emotional support and skills development to be successful in school and beyond. 4. Encouragement and support to engage in the education process. (p. 7).

The education community plays a crucial role in creating a nurturing environment. School leaders, such as principals or administrators must make families as

well as their children feel heard and welcomed. They must provide the training and tools for all staff members to promote an inclusive environment inviting to all students and their families. There are many different ways educators can include families in the education process. Breiseth (2010) mentioned that "There are many ways that educators and administrators can connect with families of English language learners (ELLs) and keep that communication strong. This communication can be challenging, but in many cases, it can make a tremendous difference in student learning" (p. 1). Breiseth (2021), describes ten strategies that schools can implement to improve contact and communication with ELL families and students. They are:

- Find families' contact information.
- Help families keep their contact information up to date.
- Make sure families know how to contact you or the school.
- Find out how families prefer to communicate.
- Find out when families prefer to communicate
- Share information about families' rights to translated information.
- Identify your translation options.
- Identify the information and updates that families of foreign students need in their language.
- Look for ways to build relationships with ELL families.
- Ask families what has (or has not) worked so far. (p.1)

All of these strategies help families feel part of a school community that will listen and respect them.

Laws and Regulations

In 1989, world leaders decided to create laws to protect children through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF). This legislation presents more than 20 fundamental laws that all countries must follow to ensure the welfare of children. One of them is the right to education, which is defined as " Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence" (UNESCO, p. 4). The law also describes the aims of education, which are "Children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment" (UNESCO, p. 4). This makes it possible to visualize how important it is to be able to provide a quality education to every student, no matter their country of origin.

Furthermore, in 2015 the U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice decided to create rules and guidelines to ensure the same rights to education are granted to all children regardless of their nationality or immigration status. Additionally, in the same year these departments decided to publish a fact sheet in six languages, called "Fact Sheet, Information for Limited English Proficient Parents and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them". This guide is intended to inform parents on their rights when they are not able to speak, write or read English. As the schools

follow this guide, they must provide all necessary information to the parents in a language that they can understand. This information can include grades, parent-teacher conferences, relevant information about the school, etc.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter, I explain the rationale of creating a handbook for the parents of English language learners (ELLs). The objective of this handbook is that parents can have access to all the resources that the county where I currently work has for them. In addition to in-school support for students, the English Second Language (ESL) department offers a number of services for parents and families who need language assistance. For example, they have classes and training in different areas that are free of charge, but unfortunately, not all parents know that they exist. That is why the objective is to provide all these benefits that the county has to these families. At the same time, this guide will help schools to have a handbook with clear and accurate information, therefore, they can transmit to their parents and families.

The role of parents in education has a great impact on their academic and social development. According to Tebben (2017) “Immigrant children’s academics are greatly affected by their parent involvement in school. This is especially true during their formative years, ages 5 – 14...” (p.8). Thereby, it is important for parents to be actively involved in their children's education, regardless of the language they speak at home. Zhen Liu and Michael J. White (2009), state that "there are significant differences in parental practices among race/ethnic groups, as well as differences between immigrant and native populations” (p.5), this leads to the conclusion that schools and counties have

a very important role to play in order to reduce these differences. Counties should implement resources to unite these families with the school system.

The role played by schools and the county is fundamental for families to feel included in their students' educational system. Schools often do not know how to approach and help these families because being from different countries they have a different culture and language. In the year 2015 the authors Love and Han, write an article where they mention that:

These cultural and linguistic differences pose challenges to schools that want to engage parents in their children's education. To support immigrant families in acclimating to a new school community and to help them become valued partners with the school, educators first must understand who these families are, their needs, and how schools can bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps between homes and schools (p.4).

Love and Han (2015) also noted that "schools and districts can develop programs and services not only to meet the basic needs of immigrant parents but also to equip and empower parents to become leaders in their school community" (p.14). Emphasizing the importance that families play in the educational process. For this reason, it is necessary to carry out practices that allow the "family learning, empowerment, and engagement in the educational journey" (p.15).

For all the aforementioned reasons, I have decided to create a handbook where I can provide all the services that my county has to offer to immigrant parents and families. This handbook will be divided into two sections: a) how to support my child at home, and

b) UCPS immigrant services. The first section is intended to provide parents with practical advice on how to support their children at home even if they do not speak the language. The second section aims to provide parents with all the information about what the county has to offer, which includes where to get information (phone, website, twitter), to what services the department offers (workshops, Parenting Classes, translation/interpretation services).

This handbook will be useful as much for the parents as for the schools. For parents, because they will be able to get information on where to go for help and how to support their children. For schools, because they will be able to know how to support their families, and what kind of information they can provide to them. Letting families know that the school is there to provide them with the right information, that even though they may not speak the same language, but they want to provide them with help and support, will lead to a better parent-school relationship.

Chapter 4: Final Project – Handbook for ESL Parents

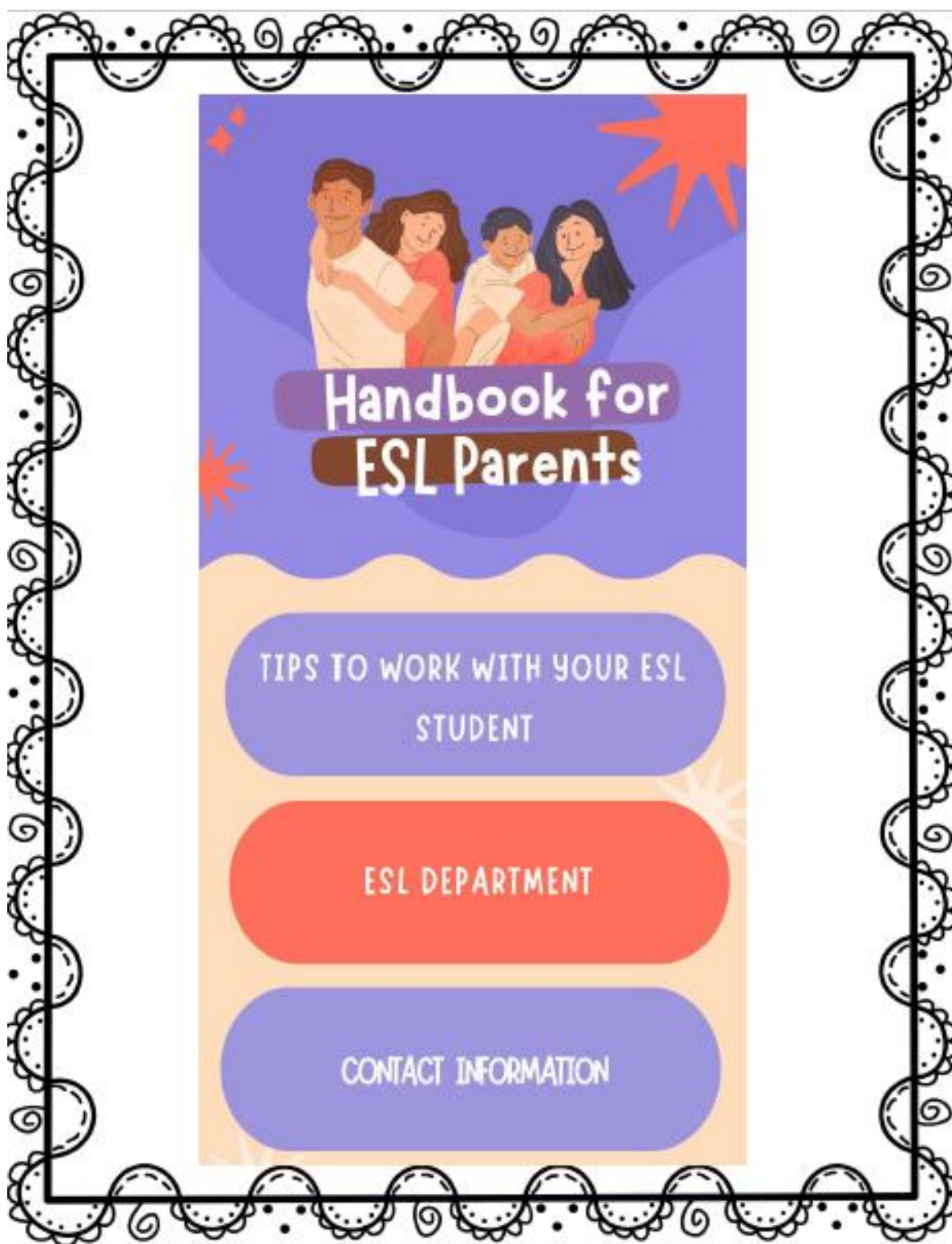
At the present time, many parents and families do not know what the English as a Second Language (ESL) department is, nor what it has to offer them. In turn, many teachers or members of the educational community are also unaware of all that this department has to offer them. That is why this handbook seeks first and foremost to make parents, families, and members of the educational community aware of the role that the ESL department plays for their county.

In addition to promoting the ESL department, this handbook provides different activities and strategies for parents to work on at home with their children, giving them different tools that can also help them learn this new language.

The handbook has a total of 27 pages, and it is mainly divided into five main parts which are:

1. The role of the parents in their child's education
2. Tips to work with your ESL student
3. ESL Department
4. Latino Outreach Services
5. My child's school

Below you will find the cover of the handbook.



Appendices

Appendix A: Handbook for ESL Parents.



Handbook for ESL Parents

TIPS TO WORK WITH YOUR ESL
STUDENT

ESL DEPARTMENT

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Introduction

This county located in North Carolina, currently has more than 3,000 students who receive support from the ESL team. The academic success of these students depends not only on the correct intervention of this department and the educational establishment, but also on the supportive help of their parents.

The role of the parents is fundamental for the academic success of the students; therefore, it is necessary to provide and promote tools for parents to know how to support their children. Parental engagement in schools is crucial. This is why the county conducts classes, activities and services for these families.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide families with tools to support their children at home. In addition, it will provide information about all the services and resources that the county offers for these families. Many families think that their children are the only ones provided ESL services by the school. They are not aware of all the other benefits the county provides for their household. That is why this handbook is useful for anyone working in the county who wants to know how to support ESL families.

The role of the parents in their child's education

Parents, or guardians, play a key role in the academic success of their children. Families, teachers, schools and the county must work together to support and deliver a quality education to their students. The University of Cambridge, indicated that "Parents play a vital role by giving children the courage and confidence to do their work, providing encouragement and helping them develop study skills". When we support our children, we provide them the tools required for a better future. Since by knowing two languages, their social and work possibilities are broadened. Zelasko and Antunez (2000) asserts that "The child who knows more than one language has personal, social, cognitive, and economic advantages which will continue throughout his/her life" (p. 9). For this reason, it is important for families to not only encourage and support their children in the process of learning a second language, but also to make them feel proud of their origins and culture.

In the next chapter, you can find simple resources and activities that you, as parents and guardians, can do at home to support your child.

Tips to work with your ESL student

HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY ESL KID?

- 1 Read together
- 2 Watch educational TV together
- 3 Start conversation
- 4 Visit the library
- 5 Use dictionary and online resources

Let's learn and have fun together!



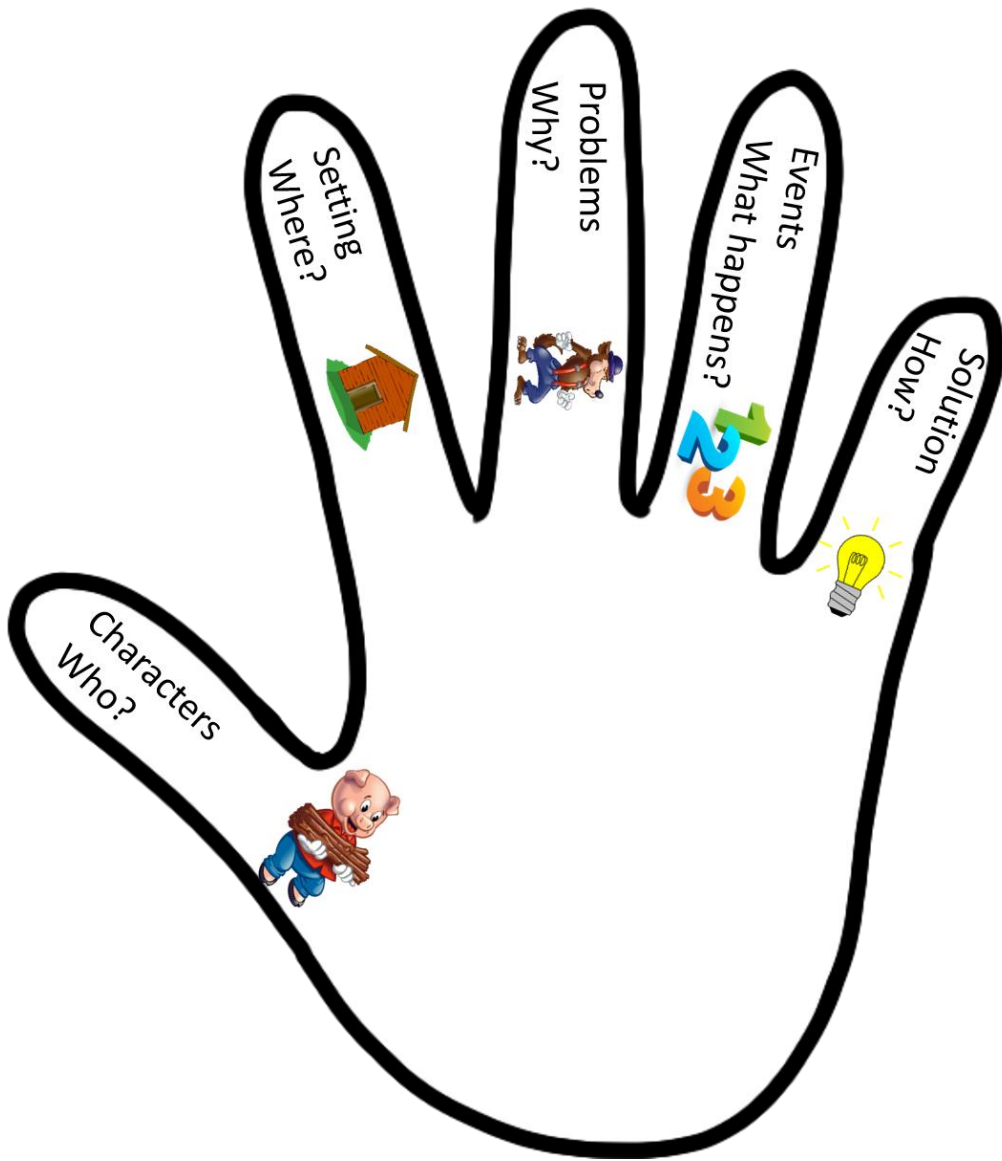
Read together

By sitting down to read with your child, this will bring many benefits and allow building new vocabulary. If the book is in your native language, it will allow your child to acquire reading strategies that can then be transferred to the new language. Reading a book in the new language will allow the child to develop vocabulary skills by learning new words. This activity will allow parents to learn as well.

It is important that reading becomes part of your daily routine at home with your children. Reading for at least 15 minutes will bring many benefits to your child. It is important that reading is something that motivates your child. The reading material can be a superhero, princess stories, or comic books. Whatever allows them to generate a habit of reading and learning new words. Another option is to read bilingual books. These books allow you to make the connection between these both languages.

As you read with your child try to connect words with the pictures in the book. Ask your child what words he or she knows, so you can both be a benefit to each other. If you do not know the meaning of a word or its pronunciation, it is not a problem. You can use some of the translators available to practice. The most important thing is that you and your child feel that this is a time of learning and connection between the two of you.

Finally, I recommend that you check reading comprehension with the 5 fingers method. The objective of this method is to use the five fingers to retell the story they have just read. This will allow them to answer the questions: *who? where? why? what happens? how?* This will have them practice speaking and using vocabulary. Below you will find the hand with these five elements.



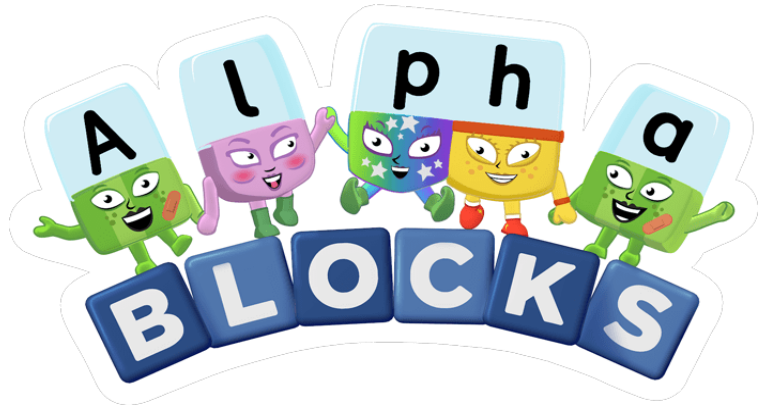
Watch Educational TV together

There are a number of wonderful children's television programs that promote the English language and literacy development. It can be a great way for both parents and children to learn English together.

From Netflix to YouTube, we can find programs that allow parents and children to learn a new language. As you watch these programs, encourage your child to repeat the words he or she hears. Below are some examples of programs and their benefits.

Alphablocks

This BBC program can be seen for free on YouTube. The program consists of each character being a letter. During each episode they teach the name of the letters, the sound, and how they are pronounced when two letters are conjugated. For



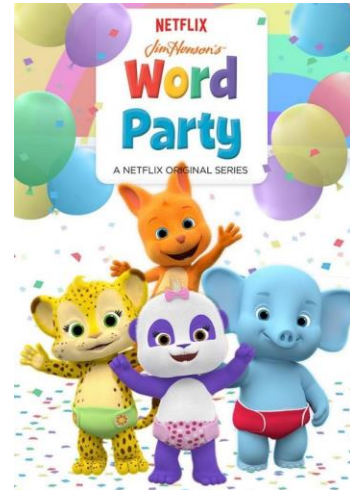
example /oo/, /ph/, and /th/. In a playful and fun way, this program allows children to learn English vocabulary and reading skills. You as parents can help your child to imitate the sounds, to identify the characters as they appear in the story, and to try to read the words when they are being formed. All of this will significantly help your child to improve their phonics skills.

➤ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_qs3c0ehDvZkbiEbOj6Drg



Word Party

This TV show has the objective of allowing viewers to interact with the characters by practicing new words, singing songs, and celebrating new learning. The program also works with mathematical concepts which allow children to learn numbers and mathematical concepts in a simple way. It is available on Netflix.



Dora the Explorer

This program has been on the air for over 20 years. It is known for being a bilingual program, where through adventures it incorporates the Spanish/English language (depending on the primary language you are watching it in). The fact that the character uses both Spanish and English allows Hispanic children to not feel ashamed to use their two languages. Through simple and repetitive vocabulary, it allows for vocabulary development and the association of new concepts.



You as parents can encourage them by asking questions such as what is Dora doing, where is the Fox, or any other question related to the story. This program can be watched on different channels or through streaming. You can find it on Nickelodeon, Netflix, and Amazon Prime.

- <https://www.nickjr.com/shows/dora-the-explorer>
- <https://www.netflix.com/ca/title/70155543>
- <https://www.amazon.com/Dora-the-Explorer-Season-1/dp/B000I9S58M>

General suggestions

Whenever you watch a movie, series or show, try to turn on the Closed Captions. This allows you not only to practice your listening skills, but also allows you to practice grammar and learn new words. By reading these words you will gradually build a new vocabulary. Also, it is important that every time you watch a program with your children you encourage them to talk and practice concepts learned in the program.

Start conversation

It is important for oral language development that children are not afraid to speak in a new language. That is why parents should motivate and encourage small conversations with their children in the new language. For example, asking them how their day has been, or how to say some objects in English. This will allow them to begin to feel more comfortable speaking and using the new language.

Having a conversation with your child and trying to incorporate the new vocabulary into the daily routine will allow both parents and children to progress in this new language. This will allow students to practice the social language, and not just the academic language being acquired in school. While in a store, restaurant or any other place, try to converse with others. Ask basic questions such as, "where is the bathroom?", this will allow your child to not be afraid to use the new language they are learning and in turn, learn new words. The most important thing at this point is that your child sees your interest in learning this new language, as well as your interest in supporting him/her in acquiring it.

You will find below two ideas or activities that you can use with your child:

1. Play with your child to identify words, letters or objects: When you are with your child on the street, in the car or at the store, say, for example, "Let's look for words that contain the letter A." You can also have your child try to name fruits and vegetables at the grocery store. This way both you and your child can learn new vocabulary.
2. Create flashcards with questions and try to answer them with your child. For example: What's your favorite movie and why? Try to create questions that

generate interest in both you and your child to encourage speaking practice between you and your child.

Visit the library

Libraries here in the United States are free of charge. They offer many types of free resources, opportunities and services for all ages that are helpful to all families. This includes immigrant families and their children. In addition to renting books, many libraries offer story times, arts and crafts classes, and English classes. It is important for you as a family to plan ahead and find the library closest to your home to access all the benefits it has for you as a family.

When you enter the library, the first thing you will see is a librarian at the front desk. Many libraries have employees who speak more than one language, so don't be afraid to ask for help. You can ask for a tour. That way you can be shown where the children's and adult sections are, the computer room, and other areas. The librarian's role is to support and guide you in the use of the library. You will be impressed by all that the library has to offer you and your family.

When you go to the library with your children, you can do a variety of activities that will allow both you and your child to learn new vocabulary and knowledge. Here are 3 examples of activities that you can do when you go to the library.

- Analyzing pictures: Every time you look at a book, try to analyze the pictures you see in the book. Try to say familiar words or tell the story through the pictures. This way you will be able to retell the story through the picture.
- Culture books: Plan to look up information about a place or topic. This will allow them to not only learn about the topic they are looking for, but also to learn new words. The library often has bilingual books that will allow them to make the connection between two languages.

- Invite them to write: Take a book and look up words they don't know what they mean. Then you can look it up in a dictionary or use one of the computers to look up its meaning. Then, encourage your child to write something with that word. You can also encourage them to look up that word in more books.

The library has a wealth of resources for families that can help them in many ways. For example, many of them have audio books that can be rented or listened to at the library. This will allow children to develop their listening skills. This is why it is important to go to your library and ask what they have to offer.

Use a dictionary and online resources

Dictionaries are a great resource to help your children with their homework as well as for you to learn a new language. Nowadays there are free applications that you can download to your cell phone that will allow you to translate words or sentences. Additionally, on the Internet there are free websites that allow your children to read books for free. Here are some of these examples:

Google translate:



This translator can be used on the web, cell phones, and tablets.

In addition to telling you what words mean in all possible languages, it also teaches you how to pronounce the word. This allows you to not only learn the meaning, but also how to say it.

It is an application that all parents should have to be able to use both in daily life and in the academic support of their children.

Unite for literacy:



This website, which can also be used on cell phones, has more than 400 free books for students to read. Another feature is that all the books are narrated in the native language, allowing students to work on their oral skills in addition to reading. This helps them to increase their vocabulary and pronunciation.

Another benefit is that it helps the development of reading skills.

❖ <https://www.uniteforliteracy.com>

Games to learn English:



The objective of this website is through different games and levels, anyone can practice different concepts and themes of the English language. Among the games that you can find are Monster phrases, Monster vocab, food, falling clouds, and Monster numbers. It is a very complex page that works different concepts in a playful and easy way for anyone who wants to learn and practice the language.

❖ <https://www.gamestolearnenglish.com/>

Duolingo:



This application allows you to learn the English language in a clear and accurate way. It starts with asking you questions in your native language and through images you must answer the questions, for example, "Which of these is coffee?" and presents three images with the name in English. This allows you to associate the new vocabulary with an image. It has different levels which allows you to advance. As you progress, the questions become more complex. The positive thing about this application is that it can be a fun activity between parents and children to improve and learn this new language.

❖ <https://www.duolingo.com/>

Cambridge / Sign and Learn:



The University of Cambridge launched on its website and on YouTube music videos, with lyrics which are easy to memorize and repeat. The objective is for children to learn, remember and use the new language. On the website, you can find activities related to each song to complement what they have learned. These videos are a great help to learn basic concepts and motivate children to learn the new language.

❖ <https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/learning-english/parents-and-children/activities-for-children/>

❖ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=->

[AiHRzKCT0Q&list=PLpmCHL8PnXq8OocyLTqyp8VkZeMfE_lwP](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AiHRzKCT0Q&list=PLpmCHL8PnXq8OocyLTqyp8VkZeMfE_lwP)



ESL Department

You can find this department in every county in the United States. The English as a Second Language department is a Title III Federal Program. Which has the objective of supporting and guaranteeing that students who do not speak English can learn English in order to be successful academically as well as in their daily lives. All this is done through classes and interventions in schools through courses, training, events and activities. The ESL department not only provides support to students in the schools, but also to teachers and parents.

They have an office that offers many services and assistance to the entire community, such as translation/interpretation services for parents, which can be requested by calling or visiting their office. In addition, their office has materials and resources for anyone who needs them.

This department is in charge of providing guidelines on how each ESL teacher should work in the assigned schools. It also offers workshops and activities for county employees so that they can be trained and learn how to work with their students. It is important for parents and any member of the educational community to be in contact with this department and the ESL teachers to see how they can support their child/student's success

There are many people working in this office with different positions. All of them are available for you as parents to approach for help or guidance. Some of the roles you may find are as follows:

- ESL Program Coordinator
- ESL Program Specialist-Middle/High
- ESL Engagement Coordinator
- ESL Registration and Testing
- ESL Translator
- ESL Bilingual Parent Liaison (Russian/Ukrainian)
- ESL Program Specialist- Elementary
- Lead ESL Program Counselor
- ESL Program Counselor
- ESL Case Manager
- ESL Bilingual Parent Liaison (Spanish)

Latino Outreach Services

This free program has the objective to support the Latino community in different areas. These include workshops, training and other relevant topics such as immigration.

In addition, it is intended to train county employees with respect to the community in order to understand its reality and needs. Some of the information provided is the cultural differences between the Hispanic culture and the American culture, and how these influences with the culture shock that these families face on a daily basis. Employees learn how to handle and support families to make this transition as quick and easy as possible for all members. Next, I will introduce you to some of the programs/workshops offered.

Parenting with a Purpose

Through 10 sessions, parents learn different topics that are useful for their everyday life. These are free and at the end of the 10 sessions, attendees receive a certificate. The topics to be covered are the next ones

- What to do when your child gets sick
- Dental Health Workshop
- Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol Prevention
- Effective Discipline
- Fire Safety in the Home (hosted by the Fire Department)
- Basic CPR / Practice with Mannequins

Fire Extinguisher Training

Parents and children can learn safety procedures in case of different situations and types of fires.

Latino College Night

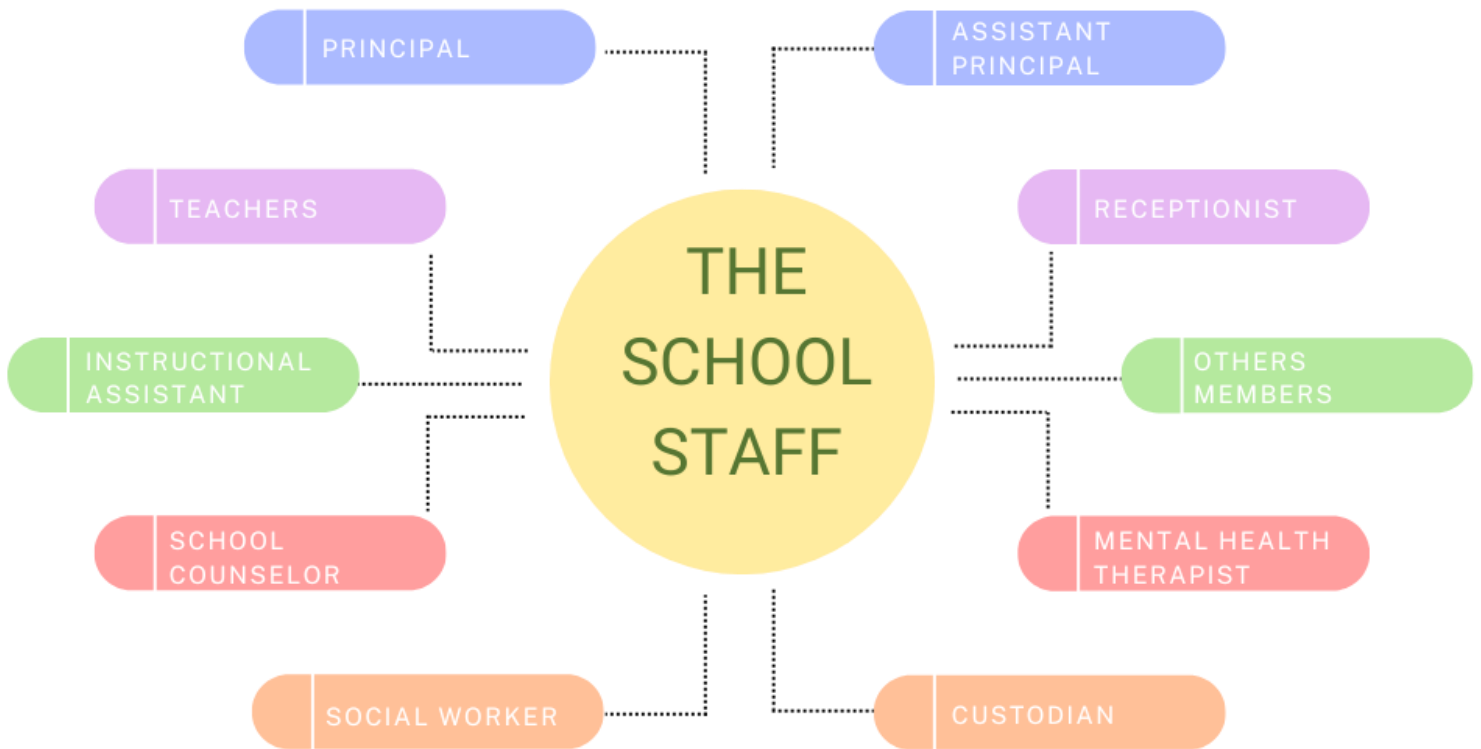
Families and students learn about the college admissions process and academic opportunities.

Health workshops and visits

Through mobile visits, they provide free exams such as mammograms, heart exams, blood tests, etc. Also offered are basic healthcare workshops.

My child's school

The school is composed of different members who have different roles. Below, you will find who they are and what they do.



Principal:

The head of the school administration. He or she is responsible for supervising the teachers and all staff members.

Assistant principal:

Has the role of assisting the principal and is in more direct support to the students and teachers.

Teachers:

They are responsible for the education of students. They must teach the content according to the needs and academic level of each student.

- ESL teachers: their objective is to teach and support students who are learning English. They work in the classroom as well as in special classrooms.
- EC teachers: Teachers responsible for teaching students with exceptional needs through quality education and related services.

Receptionist:

They are located in the front office and are responsible for greeting all visitors to the school. They ensure effective communication between school administrators, parents, students and community members. The receptionists will provide you with the necessary information about what documents you need to complete or if you need anything relating to your child's education, and they will tell you who to contact.

School counselor:

They are the people in charge to support students in different needs, including personal, social and academic. They help students adjust to school.

Mental Health Therapist:

Provides additional therapy to students who have a clinical condition that requires additional specialized therapy. This specialist works with different

members of the school to provide the best support to these students. These include teachers, school counselors, and administrators.

Social Worker

They have the objective to eliminate social barriers and promote academic success for students. They are a connection between the school, the home and the community. They perform their duties by conducting home visits, obtaining information about the families and the communities where they live, in order to help both the students and their families with different social services that the school system cannot provide for them.

Custodian

They are the people in charge of keeping the educational establishment clean, orderly for all members of the educational community.

Other members:

The school has many other members who work for the academic success of the students. They strive to support the daily work of all members of the educational community. Among them are Speech Language Pathologist, Nurses, Bookkeepers, Therapists, and School Resource Officers. If you want to know more information about these or other members, please contact your school and ask about that person's role and how they can help you.

Appendix

Acronyms

EC	Exceptional Children
ESL	English as a Second Language
HLS	Home Language Survey
IEP	Individualized Education Program.
Tittle I	Is the largest federal education funding program for schools. Its aim is to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. School funding is based on the number of low-income children, generally those eligible for the free and reduced-price lunch program.
Title III	Is the section of No Child Left Behind that provides funding and addresses English language acquisition and standards and accountability requirements for limited English proficient students
WIDA	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment.

Letters Templates

Here are two types of letters you can use if you need to excuse your child's absence from school or if you need to dismiss your child from school early.

Absence Note

Good morning *(teacher's name)*,

My child, *(student name)* was absent from school on *(date(s) of absence)*, because she/he *(the reasons)*.

Thanks, and please excuse my child,
(Your name)
(Your Signature)
(Your phone number)

Early dismissal Note

Good morning *(teacher's name)*,

My child, *(student name)* will be leaving school early on *(date)*, because she/he *(explain the reasons)*.

Thank you very much,
(Your name)
(Your Signature)
(Your phone number)

Useful links

Colorín Colorado

- This website aims to provide parents and schools with resources, articles, activities, tips and advice, so that they can be used in a variety of different ways.
- <https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

- This is the page where you can find relevant information about how to enroll your child, as well as learn more about the curriculum and/or any information about your state's department of education.
- <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/>

U.S Department of Education

- In this link you can find all the information regarding the legal rights of immigrant students in U.S. schools.
- <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.html>

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